



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

News Release

Maui National Wildlife Refuge Complex

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Work to Resume on Kealia Coastal Boardwalk

Work to replace the cracked plastic boards on the Kealia Coastal Boardwalk is scheduled to begin tomorrow, starting the next phase of this long-awaited project. All of the original plastic material will be replaced with a plastic/wood composite made by Trex Company, Inc.

“Don’t give up hope, the boardwalk will be finished in the not too distant future,” said Glynnis Nakai, Kealia Pond National Wildlife Refuge manager. “We know it’s been a lengthy process, but we want to ensure the boardwalk offers a safe and enjoyable experience for visitors.”

The boardwalk, located on Ma‘alaea Flats along North Kihei Road, was initially constructed with specially made recycled plastic decking, kick rail, handrail, and cap rail, but soon after installation, the boards began cracking. Subsequent structural testing indicated quality issues with the product. After looking at available replacement materials, the Federal Highway Administration and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service selected a well-known commercially available product called Trex to replace the plastic.

“It was always our intent to use recycled materials for the boardwalk, and Trex makes its decking from recycled plastic grocery bags, reclaimed pallet wrap, and hardwood sawdust,” Nakai said. “The company estimates it uses about 50 percent of the recycled grocery bags available on the market.”

Central Construction, Inc., of Kahului, the boardwalk contractor, will be working from the far end of the boardwalk toward the beginning, removing the old boards and replacing them with the new product in accordance with the manufacturer’s recommended installation instructions.

“Although the boardwalk has never been opened, we know people are using it,” said Nakai. “For safety reasons, we ask that everyone stay off the boardwalk, both because of the cracked boards and to stay out of the way of the construction crew.”

“We’re also working on the interpretive panels that will be installed along the boardwalk,” Nakai said. “When everything is complete, we think the boardwalk will offer a wonderful and educational experience for Maui’s local residents as well as visitors.”

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